



## **Newsletter 42 – April 2015**

Welcome to our Newsletter. We invite you to contribute articles, tips, questions and answers for others to share. Feedback is always welcome. Have you missed an edition? Read the archived Newsletters on our website.

**April Meeting Review:** *Reflections on Brecon Housing*, by Harley Simpson.

It was a pleasure to welcome back our member, Harley Simpson, who came from Devon to talk to us. He is, however, very much a Breconian, having been born and brought up in the Struet. As a social scientist, Harley is interested in the development of housing and the historical conditions of the poor. By combining his academic interests and his childhood and adolescent memories of housing in Brecon, he provided a vivid description of the inadequate housing conditions – insanitary and overcrowded – of areas such as the Struet during the twentieth century. He then spoke about the building of social housing in Brecon to provide better conditions for those who were inadequately housed. It was interesting to reflect on the reluctance of some residents to leave the community in which they lived and socialised, despite the promise of improved housing. The audience joined in with the general discussion of these issues and we had a most enjoyable and informative afternoon.

Prior to the main talk, Helen Ball used a live connection to the *FamilySearch.org* website to show us how to conduct focused research (rather than a broad search) in the genealogical collections held at Salt Lake City by the LDS. She included the use of geographical filters and explained the 'Wiki' feature on the newly designed LDS website.

### **This month on our Website**

Since our last Newsletter (published 24 March 2015) we have added/updated the following:

- **Parish Pages:** added *Llanddewi* (twenty-five parishes now available):  
<http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/parishes/index.htm>
- **Monthly Meeting Report:** added report and slide show from the April 2015 meeting:  
<http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/meetings/index.htm>
- **Members' Interests:** updated to reflect the 2015 membership:  
<http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/members-interests.htm>
- **Help Pages:** added item on a former prisoner of war camp at Felinfach:  
<http://www.blfhs.co.uk/help.htm>
- **Newsletter:** added Newsletter 42 (the one you are now reading):  
<http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/newsletters.htm>
- **Noticeboard:** updated 11 April with *Call for Nominations* (prior to June's AGM) and notice of the May visit to Treberfydd: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/noticeboard.htm>
- **Public News Pages:** updated 22 April <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/news.htm>
- **Members' News Pages:** updated 22 April <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/news.htm>

***Check the News Pages every few days and the Noticeboard at least weekly.***

**Help needed!** The next parishes being tackled are: Llanddeti and Llanddewi Abergwesyn. If you can contribute any photographs or textual material relating to these parishes, or if you wish to report any problems with the website, email our webmaster John Ball at [john@jlb2011.co.uk](mailto:john@jlb2011.co.uk)

### **PROBERTs of Lower Chapel – Can You Help?**

You will remember this request which was posted on our last Newsletter

"We are trying to trace any living descendants of a PROBERT couple buried at the Bethesda Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Lower Chapel. Their gravestone gives the following names and details:

**William PROBERT *Penlan*, died 31 May 1880**  
**Ann PROBERT *Bwlchhenllan*, died 17 April 1904**

If you are descended from this couple, or if you think you know who is, please get in touch with Hilary Williams via the contact details listed below."

The person who made the request was Charles Cravos of Llanfihangel Talylyn. He had bought a framed memorial as part of a sale lot and was seeking a descendant of the Proberts to whom he could pass on the item.

After seeing the notice in our newsletter, BLFHS member Gwen Eckley was put in touch with Mr Cravos who has since handed over the picture to Gwen as the memorial was to her great, great grandparents. She had not seen this item before and was delighted to take possession of it. She is most grateful to Mr Cravos for donating the heirloom to a direct descendent of the Proberts of Lower Chapel..

Here (below) is a photo of this quite unusual framed memorial. Though difficult to see in the photograph, the memorial is embossed so that the pillars, statues and the other decorative embellishments stand proud of the inscription.



Photograph by Robert Eckley

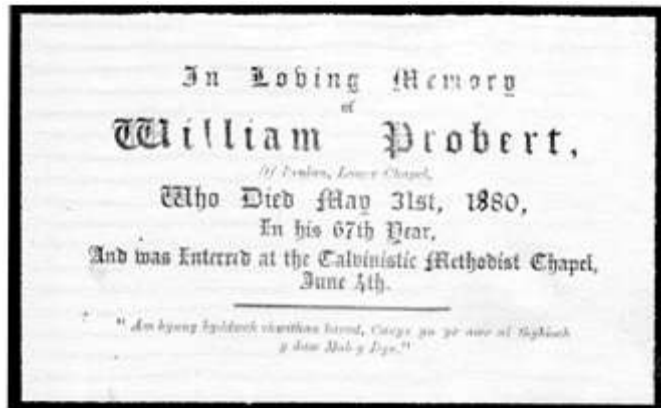
The inscription reads:

“In Affectionate Remembrance of  
**WILLIAM PROBERT**  
*Penlan*  
Who Died May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1880; aged 67 years.  
Interred at the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, June 4<sup>th</sup>.

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Also of  
**ANN PROBERT**  
*Bwlchenllan late Penlan.*  
Who died April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1904; Aged 84 years.  
Interred at Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, April 27<sup>th</sup>

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“Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord”

We would be interested to know whether anyone else possesses a memorial of this type, as opposed to the simple card type such as the one shown (right), that Gwen already possessed, commemorating the same William Probert.



### The 1911 Census

The comment below appears on the 1911 census form for Abercynrig House, Llanfrynach, Breconshire.

I am naturally a law abiding subject of the Crown – during the 26 years that I have regularly paid the rates & taxes, I have also filled up two previous Census papers.

BUT

As there appears to be no way open to me to protest against the perpetual hanging up of the Women's Suffrage Bill which has passed its second reading six separate times, on the present occasion I reluctantly decline to fill up this Census paper.

A Sturt

So who was A Sturt?

Although she signed the form *A Sturt*, her real name was Beatrix Marion Sturt née Muirhead (born 1849 in Hastings, Sussex; died 1944 in Bewdley, Worcestershire). In 1876, she married Colonel Napier George Sturt in Thane, Oxfordshire: they had three children.

Colonel Napier George Sturt R.E. was born in Australia in 1836, and died in 1901 at Llanfihangel Court, Abergavenny. Napier was the oldest of four siblings. His father, Charles Napier Sturt (1795-1869), was born in India and went to New South Wales as captain of the Dorset Regiment to oversee convicts. He became a noted explorer in Australia and has the Charles Sturt University in Bathurst named after him.

In 1852, Napier came to England to attend Rugby School. In 1856, he secured a commission in the Royal Engineers at the Military Academy at Woolwich. During the early 1860s he was stationed in Malta, Corfu and Gibraltar. By 1868 Napier and his brother Charles Sheppey found themselves at the Relief of Magdala in the Abyssinian campaign. Napier had been ordered to clear the Senafe Pass and then to move up into the front lines as a field engineer. Charles was in charge of supplies. Both men were mentioned in despatches and together returned to Bombay. Napier returned home at the end of 1868 and proceeded to the Brompton Barracks at Chatham to undergo a course of instruction in electricity, telegraphy and exploding torpedoes. Lieut Colonel Napier George Sturt, Royal Engineers, was gazetted as Colonel on 19 March 1888. He retired and settled in Llanfihangel Court, Monmouthshire where he became a JP and county councillor. He died there in 1901. His wife Beatrix became biographer of her father in law, Charles Sturt.

I do not know why Mrs Sturt came to Llanfrynach in her widowhood, nor when she left Llanfrynach. Whilst there, she became involved with the WW1 war effort on the home front. The Brecon newspapers show examples of her charity work during this time:

- She played a leading role in the management of the South Wales Borderers Prisoners of War Fund.
- She made donations to the Red Cross Hospital at Penoyre.
- She was Vice President of the "Welcome Home" movement at Llanfrynach for servicemen returning from the War.

Further reference:

- for photographs relevant to the article above  
<http://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/collection/Charles+Sturt+Memorial+Museum+Trust+Collection>

## **NEXT MEETING**

Date and time: Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – visit to Treberfydd, Llangasty

**NB** the visit to Treberfydd is now fully booked.

there is no BLFHS meeting at Brecon Library in May.

**BLFHS WEBSITE:** Our website address: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk>

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

If you wish to respond to or comment on an item in this newsletter, or contribute to the next newsletter or to our website, please contact our Chairperson:

Hilary Williams

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Tel: 01874 624432 E-mail: [chair@blfhs.co.uk](mailto:chair@blfhs.co.uk)